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THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN THE DELAWARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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WRITTEN BY THE FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE DELAWARE AND WILMINGTON DIVISIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, THIS BOOKLET PRESENTS A FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN DELAWARE. AFTER A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE BEGINNINGS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY, THE AUTHOR DESCRIBES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND MENTAL HYGIENE IN 1932, FIRST AS A DEPARTMENT IN THE WILMINGTON SCHOOLS AND THEN AS A STATE DIVISION. A SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES IN THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES INCLUDES SURVEYS OF FACILITIES AND NEEDS. ADOPTION OF CASE HISTORY PROCEDURES, INTERVIEWS WITH HEADS OF AGENCIES, APATHY TOWARD EDUCATION OF CRIPPLED CHILDREN, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN WILMINGTON IN 1935, A CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION GRANT IN 1936, A MANDATORY SPECIAL EDUCATION ACT IN 1939, SUBSEQUENT FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, AND ACTIVITIES OF PARENT GROUPS. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 1950'S AND 1960'S ARE RECOUNTED. THE APPENDIXES INCLUDE CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AND A LISTING OF 53 DOCUMENTS, JOURNALS, AND NEWS ARTICLES. THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE AUTHOR AT 311 HIGHLAND AVENUE, LYNDALIA, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19804, FOR $0.50, IN CASH. (DF)

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# THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN THE DELAWARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## I. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This brief story is largely restricted to a running account of the efforts put forth by a new Division in the Delaware and Wilmington public schools to develop and coordinate the educational program for all kinds of handicapped school children. This Division was first known as the Division of Special Education and Mental Hygiene; but a few months after the writer's retirement in 1947 the state branch became known as the Division of Guidance Services, and later as the Division of Child Development and Guidance Services, and later still as the Division of Exceptional Children and Youth. In the 1965-66 School Directory the Director is referred to as Director of Child Development, Guidance and Pupil Personnel. In the Wilmington system, the head of the department (here divisions are known as departments) has been consistently listed as Director of Child Development and Guidance since 1947-1948. The title adopted originally was intended to emphasize the special educational approach required by all kinds of educational deviates and the mental hygiene aspect of all phases of education.

Only incomplete stories of this development have thus far appeared in print. The suggestion has been offered on a number of occasions that a true story should be prepared by the founder of the Division who is familiar first-hand with the actual facts which no one else at this belated hour could possibly supply. This task has been undertaken on the conviction, often expressed in print, that a correct picture should be made available for present and future generations of the beginnings of every worth-while socio-educational facility, whether private or public. In pursuance of that conviction he has heretofore published a number of histories, such as the history of the National Assoication of State Directors of Special Education (of which he was a charter member and president and secretary for a number of years), the American Association of Clinical Psychologists (of which he was

chairman of the organization meeting and a founder), now the Division of Clinical Psychology of the American Psychological Association; the Development of the Section of Special Education and Mental Hygiene of the Delaware State Education Association, and the Delaware Chapter (No. 50) of the Council for Exceptional Children (both founded upon his initiative), available only in a limited typescript; the History of the Delaware Psychological Association (of which he was chairman of the historical committee); and other organizations.

### *Authentic historicities a product of adequate and correct factual documentations*

Reliable historical compilations are the product of laborious search for the facts as they actually transpired. They cannot be accomplished by processes of wishful thinking, or imaginary envisagement, or dependence on secondary sources of information which are often based on hearsay and may be lacking in essential and verified details. Exact historical documentation may be a work of extreme drudgery and would fain be avoided by all except those whose dedication to truth finding overcomes their inertia or dislike for accumulating exact details. But propagandistic wishful thinking of those who may have axes to grind and shortcuts by those who dread drudgery are unreliable substitutes for realistic fact finding. Such procedures are not legitimate techniques for the recording of historical data.

Some of the brief historical sketches of the story of special education in Delaware that have appeared from time to time in verbal or written form have been marred by the failure to utilize the available reports and bulletins issued by the State Education Department and have suffered from errors of commission and omission which have left a distorted image of events. To the true historian avoidable errors are inexcusable, while errors of omission are just as culpable as errors of commission and sometimes more perversive of truthful reporting.

It has required many months of unrelenting ransacking of official reports, legislative documents, and incidental references to Delaware developments in books and papers and the memory revival of unrecorded experiences to cull out the factual data for this documentary. The ideal of complete historical authenticity has been approximated if not fully achieved in most areas of research. The record will disclose what was projected and what was accomplished during the pioneering days which coincided with the greatest economic debacle that the country ever experienced.

## II. ANCIENT BEGINNINGS

Before launching upon the story of modern Delaware developments it is pertinent to point out that the Delaware Legislature made specific provisions for the education of deaf and blind "indigent" children in the early 1840's. In 1841 it authorized a maximum expenditure of $1000.00 a year for the education of "indigent" "deaf and dumb" children in the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb then located in Germantown. The grant was limited to "two children at any one time from each county" who had been recommended to the Governor by the three "associate judges" who had been constituted "trustees of the deaf." This institution, even now under private control, was founded in 1820 as the country's third oldest residential school for the deaf, and was renamed "The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in 1934. It enrolled five pupils from Delaware prior to the legislative grant, presumably at the expense of the parents or charitable organizations. It admited two pupils from Delaware, a boy and a girl, in 1842. In June, 1965, 15 of the 512 enrollees were from Delaware, presumably under state subvention. The tuition rate at that time was $3067 for resident pupils.

In 1843 blind pupils were included in the act for education in the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction for the Blind, renamed in 1946 the Overbrook School for the Blind, which also remains a private institution. The number of Delaware registrants was one in 1844 and one in 1845 (the same girl). Were no more candidates available, or was little effort made to locate them? In 1965 there were five children from Delaware in this institution on state subsidy. At that time the tuition rate for resident pupils was $2425.

No changes of any vital consequence were made in these old statutes except for the addition of home instruction for home-bound crippled children in 1935 to provide for the payment of limited services of a home teacher in the Wilmington area who had theretofore been compensated by a group of Wilmington women. This group included the famed Mrs. A. D. (Emalea Pusey) Warner, who became an active supporter of the new Division and who had previously vigorously supported the establishment of the Women's College in the University of Delaware. For her great services to education in Delaware two establishments have been named in her honor, the Warner Junior High School in Wilmington and Warner Hall at the University of Delaware.

## III. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND MENTAL HYGIENE

If the first major step in the development of special education for

handicapped children in Delaware was the subsidization of the education of indigent deaf and blind children over a century ago, the second major step was the establishment of the Division of Special Education and Mental Hygiene in 1932 on the initiative of Samuel M. Stouffer, Superintendent of Schools in Wilmington, and Harry V. Holloway, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. It started as a Department in the Wilmington public schools in May and as a "Division" in the State Board of Education in September. The term "Division" will be used in this recital.

The writer was consulted by the two superintendents regarding the program of the projected division and became available for the directorship as a result of the financial collapse of a new university because of the violent financial dislocation of the early thirties. He had previously founded and directed special education departments in the St. Louis and Baltimore public schools, in the schools of Ohio through a special legislative grant to Miami University and had concurrently directed university departments for the training of special class teachers and psychological examiners, and had also directed psychological clinics for the examination of mental retardates particularly.

The program of services recommended for the new Division is recorded in the written memorandum, dated January 29, 1932, which was approved by the two authorities on April 15th. The program of services was reproduced in outline form in the first annual report to the Wilmington superintendent of schools. The detailed descriptions of the programs initiated to achieve the multifarious objectives of the Division are contained in the annual reports made to the Board of Public Instruction in Wilmington (never published) and the annual reports of the State Board of Education (published), and in many special bulletins in mimeographed form sent from time to time to all the public schools in the state, and special articles published in professional periodicals.

### *The acclaimed division throttled by serious impedimenta*

The establishment of the new Division met with immediate acclaim by many school administrators, classroom teachers, nurses, social workers, civic and welfare organizations, public spirited individuals, and the press. In spite of the favorable acclaim, the development of the Division's programs was seriously hampered by numerous obstacles, great and small. Reference has already been made to the greatest of these, the great economic strangulation of the early thirties, which made it impossible to obtain any money with which to do the job. The Division started without any budget, other than about $250.00

from each agency for supplies and equipment, particularly for special-class activities, and the salaries for the director available from staff appropriations. Limited stenographic services were made available on a part-time basis from the two agencies, but on an inadequate scale. Before the nation had emerged from this major catastrophy, it was projected into World War II by the Japanese attack of September 7, 1941, all of which led to colossal deficit spending throughout the country. The Delaware Legislature was not in favor of deficit spending at that time, and started on a drastic course of reduced spending. In 1933, a few months after the Division had launched its program, the Legislature voted substantial reductions in the over-all financial support of the public schools, which continued until the end of the 1937 legislative session. Teachers' salaries were cut 10 per cent on the average, cuts that were not completely restored until 1937 — the Legislature outlawed all salary increments until 1937. In addition it cut traveling allowances from 8 to 6 cents. The battle cry of the educationists was to hold the line if possible and to defer new projects until the cuts had been eliminated. In point of fact, the appropriations for 1936-1937 were about the same as for 1933, except for the increases needed for the authorized salary restorations and the cost of new enrollees. Building operations almost came to a complete standstill, leaving no vacant rooms for any new or expanded activities. It was generally understood that propaganda for new developments were under strict taboo. I indulged in little promotional work between 1933 and 1937 in comformity with the general directive. Nevertheless new special classes were opened in several schools, as shown in the tabulations published in the annual reports.

In connection with the 1933 drive for economy, many legislators severely criticized in the public prints the state education department for the employment of an excessive number of directors and supervisors. Several such functionaries were singled out as unnecessary. No criticism was filed against the newly established Division in that connection.

Apparently in response to the criticisms of the politicians the State Superintendent recommended the dropping of the Special Education Division probably because it was the most recently established. But this recommendation was rejected both by the State Board of Education and by the Superintendent of Schools in Wilmington, who was primarily responsible for its creation. In lieu thereof the State Superintendent reduced the tenure of the Director of Special Education from 2 1/2 to 2 days a week and imposed a salary cut of 25 per cent, which was continued throughout his entire tenure, compared with a

20 per cent cut from the Wilmington schools, which was reduced to 10 per cent in September, 1935, and completely eliminated in September, 1937, in accordance with the action of the legislature. In conference with the Wilmington superintendent somewhat later, he stated that he had completely rejected the attenpt to abolish the Division and that he regarded the cut I had received as a "violation of the terms of my contract" and as a transparent trick to reduce my salary." The state superintendent in a later letter in my possession (June 8, 1943) conceded that this was true. He justified his action on the ground that I was paid a higher rate than three other directors (whose names he mentioned). Of course, that was not a matter of any relevancy in the light of my contract and in the light of a statement he made in writing on August 23, 1937, that there is no "salary schedule for heads of departments." He regarded the salary as too large for the "size of the job," which he knew had been strangled because of the failure to supply the wherewithal. That the State Board did not share that view appears from its action on July 11, 1933, in which my reemployment was authorized even up to the salary level at which I came, which, I had been assured, was my starting salary. I was not advised of this action until many years later. In 1937 I met the then president of the Board (Henry Ridgely) at the first meeting of the Constitution Sesquicentennial Commission of Delaware (he nominated me for the secretaryship of that Commission). At that meeting he assured me that he was 100 per cent interested in the work I was doing and invited me to call at his office when I had time, as he wanted to talk over some of the work of the Division. At the subsequent conference he asked me for a statement of my problems, of which he seemed to have some knowledge. Emphasis was placed particularly on the lack of an operating budget which made it difficult to move ahead, and the salary discrimination on grounds incompatible with the terms of my contract and with the salary cuts and restorations I had received from the Wilmington schools, which were in accord with the action of the Legislature.

He replied that there was no reason for the discrimination and that he was for the extension of the program, and he would so report to the superintendent. May I add this comment: I was not so much disturbed by the monetary loss from this capricious action, as I was by the fact that I had to render many hours of unremunerated services in order to get the work done during a long term of years. That irritant was of minor importance compared with the continuous lack of financial support for the entire program as shown hereinafter. However, in spite of all of the handicaps, progress was achieved in many areas for ground breaking in a new field, as shown in what follows.

## IV. SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES DURING THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES

### *Surveys of existing facilities and needs*

The first task tackled by the Division was to obtain an accurate image of the existing school facilities for handicapped children from personal inspections and personal interviews with school staffs, and also from personal inquiries among heads of welfare organizations of many types. During the first year 134 visits were made to the Wilmington schools and 123 to state schools in all parts of the state. State schools include all schools outside of Wilmington. The interviews included interviews with many handicapped children.

### *Adoption of "case history" procedures*

During the early part of this period detailed procedures were drawn up for the referral on special blanks of candidates for special classes (or for differential education or medical treatment). Admission standards were formulated, especially for classes for mental retardates, in which most of the interest of the school staff centered at that time. Appropriate forms were drawn up for the projected comprehensive "case study" procedures, covering the school history, home and neighborhood conditions, with emphasis on the cultural and environmental disadvantages, the family histories, inclusive of genetic components, and physical and psychological examinations. The gathering of the prescribed data required the cooperation of teachers, principals, superintendents, nurses, visiting teachers, school physicians and physicians connected with public and private hospitals, including the staff of the mental hygiene clinic at Farnhurst.

### *Interviews with heads of agencies*

Invitations were extended to heads of agencies interested in the education of different kinds of handicapped children to present their claims for assistance. Vigorous presentations were made by Mrs. Anne Rowe Stevens, Superintendent of the State Commission for the Blind (which carried on an educational program for the seriously visually impaired) on behalf of the partially sighted, and by Miss Margaret Sterck, on behalf of the hard of hearing. Miss Sterck was founder and director of a private school for deaf children located in Wilmington, started in 1929. Strangely no one ever appeared on behalf of crippled children with whose difficulties I was much concerned, as I had recently waged a successful campaign for a bond issue in Baltimore (in 1929-30) for the construction of two new school buildings

for housing and educating these children (which carried by a tremendous majority). This anomalous situation deserves some elaboration.

*Apparent apathy for educational rehabilitation of orthopedics*

Early in the program two calls were made at the Delaware Hospital to inspect the work in the orthopedic clinic then in operation according to report, and to explain the contemplated educational services of the new Division. But contact could not be obtained with the clinic director on the explanation that the clinic was handling the problem adequately. In a third visit a social worker from the clinic came to the office and stated that the clinic was not in need of any assistance. A later written request for the recommendation of candidates for an orthopedic class was never answered. Still later an interview was had with a teacher of home-bound crippled children which brought out the fact that she was instructing four or five cripples in Wilmington homes. She knew of no one else rendering similar services. A special questionnaire investigation in the Wilmington public schools in March, 1934, yielded nine children "crippled to the extent that walking was difficult." •

In the mid-thirties the Division was visited by a representative from the Chicago headquarters of the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults (Harry H. Howett), who stated that he was interested in the formation of a Delaware branch of the National Society, but was discouraged by the fact that he had found no one interested in the project. I recounted my similar experiences (A state society was eventually established but not until 1948, a year after my retirement). I made other attempts to develop facilities for orthopedics. In 1942-1943 I visited every school in Wilmington to root out eligible cases. This investigation yielded some 10 to 12 eligibles for a class, but no success in launching a class because of the failure to obtain financial support:

After the passage of S. B. 135 in 1943 the superintendent of the Wilmington schools (Dr. W. R. Lemmel) stated that he wanted to start a class for "spastics" and asked me to reinvestigate the situation in the Wilmington schools. A personal investigation the following year (1943-1944) yielded a dozen eligibles in the white schools, but no class was ever started because the superintendent could find no funds with which to finance the project.

In November, 1947, things began to stir in the field of the comprehensive rehabilitation of the orthopedics. A nursery school for cerebral palsied youngsters, ages 4 to 8, was launched in the Tatnall school by an organization known as "Delaware Organization for Spastics and

Other Handicapped," with active cooperation of various public and private agencies. This class was supported by the newly organized Delaware Society for Crippled Children and Adults from September, 1948 to 1951, the last year at the Bishopstead on 14th Street, where it was operated jointly by the Society and the State Division of Child Development and Guidance. In 1951 the responsibility for the program was divided: a parents' group, which later became the Delaware Association for Retarded Children (DARC) assumed the care of the severely disabled (then in the Kutner School, now defunct), while the State Division assumed the education of the "educables" in No. 13 school at 17th and Union streets. In the school year 1960-61 this school was relocated in a new building in the De La Warr school district, and renamed John G. Leach School. In the school year 1961-62 Wilmington established its orthopedic classes in the new Evan B. Shortridge school (Thomas W. Mulrooney, present Director of Child Development and Guidance, has cooperated in the documentation of these events).

It is difficult to explain the apparent apathy in Delaware in the early thirties in providing special education facilities for crippled children. Doubtless a number of factors are involved. One of these was the failure to recognize the basic educational implications of a comprehensive program of orthopedics. The medico-surgical work was considered to cover all the requirements. But orthopedics without educational and occupational rehabilitation is fragmentary and incomplete and does not necessarily eventuate in socio-occupational habilitation. This was fully recognized in Baltimore at a slightly earlier date, where the writer obtained the enthusiastic cooperation of orthopedists and other medical specialists. In Delaware at this time I could not even get a hearing for the presentation of the contemplated program of the new Division.

The second major cause of the apparent disinterest in the education of the crippled child was the press announcement in 1935 of the establishment of the Alfred I. duPont Institute for crippled children. The general expectation was that the Institute would meet all the needs of Delaware crippled children of diverse types — a view shared by the writer — so why develop a program in the public schools. Eventually it became clear that the eligibles for treatment at the Institute were highly restricted. Not all orthopedics were eligible. This knowledge spurred the development of other needed facilities, both private and public, such as the curative workshop in Wilmington started in 1945 under the spur of the Junior League of Wilmington; the Wilmington Opportunity Center for the occupational training of handicapped

persons of employable age, opened in February, 1957, and located in October, 1964, in a new 50,000 square foot building, the largest building of the kind among those visited by the writer in many sections of the country. Delaware has now become a center of vigorous rehabilitative service for orthopedics — a story left for later historiographers.

*Welcome breaks in 1935-1936*

In September, 1935, the Wilmington school system established the position of psycho-educational examiner (now these examiners are classified as school psychologists, although they may not hold the doctorate), with Marion Font as the first such appointee. With this appointment the examination load in the Wilmington schools could be greatly expanded. In the latter part of the year the Junior League of Wilmington donated to the Division a Western Electric Phonoaudiometer, an audiometric screening test with which masses of children above the second grade could have their hearing tested. A small grant from the Women's Club of the Trinity Episcopal Church in Wilmington made it possible to inaugurate the audiometric testing on a part-time basis with Virginia Wallin as the state's first audiometrician. The State Department of Public Instruction thus became the first state education department in the United States to provide audiometric testing on a state-wide basis. The pattern set by Delaware was subsequently adopted by a few other state education departments.

*Delaware Citizens Association Grant*

In January, 1936, the Delaware Citizens Association, after an extended study by its executive secretary, Etta J. Wilson, made a grant to the Division of $3,800 a year for the purchase of supplies and equipment for the special classes for the mentally handicapped and for the office, and for the development of needed examination services. The first examiners to serve the state under that grant were Bertha Cahill, as psycho-educational examiner (now Mrs. John C. Hoffman of suburban Wilmington) and Virginia Wallin as psychological examiner and audiometrician (still in the service as school psychologist). The Delaware state Education Department thus also became the first state education department in the country to supply individual psychological examinations on a state-wide basis. Part of this service now continues on the same basis, while some special districts administer the program. The pattern adopted by Delaware in 1936 has been followed by a number of state education departments.

These welcome contributions from private sources enabled the Division to inaugurate its program of the scientific study, diagnosis,

and evaluation of the referrals. To avoid unnecessary duplications and waste of resources an agreement was reached in September, 1936, between the education boards and the Board of Trustees of the Delaware State Hospital at Farnhurst for the division of the examination services, according to which the Division of Special Education and Mental Hygiene would examine children who are "mentally deficient, mentally and educationally retarded, who are subject to specific mental or educational disabilities or possess specific abilities, and who are special educational problems for other reasons." On the other hand, the Mental Hygiene Clinic would examine referrals from the special education department "who are subject to behavior disorders or suffer from emotional or psychiatric disorders." Incidentally, it should be recorded that the division was dependent upon the Mental Hygiene Clinic for examination services during its first three years except for a limited number of children examined by the Director on a very tight schedule of the supervision single-handedly of the whole program in the State and in Wilmington, which required much overtime work.

These grants, small as they were, constituted an enormous boost toward the realization of the basic goals adopted in 1932. They may be regarded as the third major step in the slow, onward advance of the program for the rehabilitation of the handicapped school children of Delaware.

### *The special education law of 1939*

The fourth major step was the enactment of the mandatory special education act (S.B. 192), effective on April 14, 1939, when signed by Governor Richard C. McMullen, prepared by the Division and referred to as the "Magna Charta for the handicapped child in the Delaware schools." This law, one of the briefest yet most comprehensive of its kind, covered the following four essentials:

1. The continuous reporting to the Division of all kinds of handicapped children in need of special education facilities.
2. The provision of needed examinations of the referrals by the state education department.
3. The provision of special education and training in accordance with the recommendations by the Division in special classes or otherwise.
4. The implementation of the entire program under the "rules and regulations" of the State Board of Education. The regulations, subsequently issued in great detail in special bulletins from the Division provided for both "education" and "training" of children more recently referred to as "educable" and "trainable" (a distinction that

cannot always be drawn with accuracy). The training of the "trainables" is not a recent innovation in Delaware, as is sometimes maintained. It was provided in the regulations that were promulgated many years before the enactment of the 1939 act. However, there was little pressure to get these low-ability children admitted to special classes for many years.

*Untoward consequences of its passage*

The immediate consequences of the enactment of the law produced difficulties for the Division not anticipated, because it resulted in the withdrawal of the grant from the Delaware Citizens Association the following June. To the Association the enactment of the law was proof that it had performed its mission, the successful demonstration of a vital need through the support of a program of pilot activities.

The act carried no appropriation. None was requested on the advice of members of the Legislature that such a request would kill the measure because of the continuance of the "financial emergency." Moreover, many members of the Legislature felt that the schools were so liberally supported that they did not need any additional financial support for special education. It was considered that the 1937 allowance of $100.00 per child in a special class for the mentally retarded as compared with $65.00 for a child in the regular grades would take care of the extra costs. But this system of extra support was discontinued in 1941.

The fact is that many schools did nothing to implement the act, in spite of its mandatory nature, on the ground that they had no funds for the additional burden, nor did they have any empty room for the additional class. Wilmington solved the space and added cost problems by increasing the registration in the special classes for individual instruction from 15 to 20 and the registration in the opportunity and prevocational classes from 20 to 25. There were classes for normal children with a registration of only 25. Some teachers at first grumbled over the excessive load, but most gradually adjusted to the enforced change. Some principals did nothing to implement the law because, then as now, they were opposed to the segregation of pupils in special classes.

The examination work (psychological) of the Division was seriously interrupted by the withdrawal of the Association support. The State Department of Public Instruction at the outset retained only one of the two psychoeducational examiners.

*Subsequent legislative grants*

The subsequent legislative grants were hugely appreciated, small as they were, because they permitted the continuance of some of the basic activities already under way, and the belated inauguration of some new activities on a pilot scale.

In 1941 S.B. 247 carried a grant of $1500, for supplies and equipment for the special classes for the mentally retarded.

On February 2, 1943, a memorandum from the Director sent to members of the Legislature called attention to the overriding obstacle (lack of financial support) that strangled the activities of the Division. This brought an immediate invitation to present the Division's needs at a joint meeting of the finance committees of the Legislature. Here the issues were fully discussed and demonstrations were made of audiometric testing. The unanimous response of the legislators was to provide financial assistance, although it was emphasized that they could provide only a part of the aid requested because of the stringent financial conditions that still continued. Many asked why they had not been informed before of the impoverishment of the Division. I could only reply that I had made known the facts to my superior officer in many reports, and could do no more.

S.B. 135, 1943 session provided a grant of $13,000 for the biennium for the inauguration of lip reading (or speech reading) for the hard of hearing and speech therapy in the Wilmington area, and also for the employment of an additional psychoeducational examiner and audiometrician.

The Governor (Walter W. Bacon) also requested a conference with me regarding the education of handicapped children, in which he professed great interest, and assured me that he would sign S.B. 135, and he hoped that the Legislature would be more generous at the next session. The Governor's attention was called to the numerous recommendations that had been made for years for the deletion of the obnoxious words "indigent" and "dumb" from the 1841 statute and all later statutes, and to the fact that a special education division was created in 1932 to supervise the education of handicapped children, and that the Governor's fund for the education of the deaf, blind, and homebound crippled ought to be transferred to that Division. The Governor replied that he was for the deletion and would sanction the transfer if he could be assured that the money would not be diverted to some other use. He said that as Governor he had witnessed a number of such transfers without legislative sanction. I assured him that the money would be definitely ear-marked.

As a result of the passage of the appropriation bill, one psychological examiner was located in the southern part of the state, and one in the northern part; and one lip reading teacher and one speech correctionist were appointed to serve in the Wilmington area. This marked the beginning of lip reading instruction and speech therapy in the Delaware public schools, although a small amount of speech correction had already been done by the examiner in the southern part of the state. E. Muriel Mitchell and Eleanor Wirth were the first education appointees for speech correction and lip reading services.

On February 9, 1945, the Governor summoned me to his office in Dover because of the notice he had received from Miss Sterck that she was closing her school in June, which created a grave situation, for about a dozen deaf children were pupils in the school at the expense of the State. He also stated that he wanted a new bill drawn, instanter summoned the secretary of State, William J. Storey, to cooperate with me in the drafting of a bill. We rushed into action at once and had H.B. 93 ready in the early afternoon. This called for an appropriation of $29,000 for the biennium for "assistance in the education of hard of hearing, deaf, crippled, speech defective, and otherwise defective children, and for audiometric and psychological examinations;" and H.B. 108, which eliminated the offensive words "dumb" and "indigent." But the Governor's educational fund remained as it had been for over a century until 1953, when one-third of the fund was transferred to the Delaware Commission for the Blind, and two-thirds to the State Department of Public Instruction. In 1955 the Governor's fund had reached $55,000.00.

The $29,000 grant was the final legislative appropriation during the writer's tenure.

After the adjournment of the Legislature the state Superintendent of Public Instruction transferred half of the appropriation to the Wilmington Schools. This made it possible for the Wilmington schools to carry out certain planned details, but, pari passu, the state Division was not able to carry out some of its projected program (the writer retired from the Wilmington system on reaching its retirement age). In consequence of this action an appeal was made to Dr. Edwin Cameron, executive secretary of the state Board of Health, to avail himself of a possible Government grant available to state health departments for the support of speech therapy services. This appeal proved successful and a speech correctionist was obtained for speech services for crippled children under the Board of Health and speech defectives under the administration of the Division.

*Recapitulation of obstacles to growth during period of wantage*

The difficulties with which the Division had to struggle from beginning to end were not solely financial and spatial (lack of vacant rooms), but included a do-nothing policy of a limited number of the school staff. To obtain competent teachers and to replace incompetent ones with competent beginners was no mean problem. To avoid misconstruction, let it be emphasized that many of the inexperiences teachers became very competent with growing experience and the pursuit of pertinent courses of instruction and were very faithful and highly dedicated in the discharge of their duties. The opposition of a few principals to special-class segregation continued as a minor factor. Even one assistant announced to principals that she was against special classes and that she was going to abolish them. In point of fact, practically all the special classes in the state disappeared after my retirement except the one in the Marshallton school, one of the first started in the state. In Wilmington some of the classes were reorganized on a part-time basis, an arrangement disapproved according to report, by two outside evaluators, Arthur B. Hill of the Office of Education in Washington and Ray Graham from the special education department of the Illinois Department of Public Instruction.

*Frontal attacks for funds by dynamic parent groups*

There was during my administration no organized group of parents and few individuals who fought doggedly for the establishment of special classes for handicapped children, as was the case in the fifties and sixties when the embattled parents of mentally retarded children made their demands vocal in the press, in frequent public meetings, and at legislative hearings. They demanded a great variety of special facilities to meet the varied needs of their children. More on this anon. Now parents *demand* that their children be transferred to special classes. Only a limited amount of such demands existed during my incumbency. On the contrary, it was sometimes necessary to use vigorous measures of persuasion to obtain the consent of some parents to the transfers. In my experience, the greatest demand for the transfer of mental retardates to special classes came from the classroom teacher who was faced with the burden of their instruction, rather than from the parents, except in the case of patent mental deficients. Many parents were inclined to blame the teacher for the child's learning difficulties, and did not hesitate to so state in the personal conferences. There are learning disabilities that are teacher-produced but they are in the minority (for instances of such disabilities, see my Personality Maladjustments and Mental Hygiene, McGraw-Hill Book Com-

pany, second edition, 1949; and Minor Mental Maladjustments in Normal People, Duke University, 1939).

## V. SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES

In spite of the financial and other impediments, already discussed, groundbreaking contributions were made in varying degrees in practically all the recognized areas of special education services. Worthy of record are:

1. The enactment of a comprehensive mandatory special class law.
2. The adoption of a system of continuous reporting of handicapped children of all kinds in need of special educational adjustments or remediation.
3. The adoption of comprehensive case study procedures for the examination of referrals — psychological, educational, physical, social and genetic.
4. Group audiometric examinations of 62,394 children from all sections of the state, and 814 individual audiometric examinations. The recommendations included proper seating, the fitting of hearing aids, the provision of lip reading, and otological examinations and treatment, varying with the individual. After 1943 lip reading (or speech reading) instruction was afforded 344 hard of hearing pupils. The education of the deaf in a special public school class was begun in September, 1945, in the Lore School, with the use of superior equipment donated by Miss Sterck, and with Miss Sterck's assistant, Margaret M. McNulty, as the teacher.
5. Psychoeducational clinics were established within the Division for the careful evaluations of children referred as mentally or educationally retarded or otherwise maladapted or maladjusted in the classroom. The number of examinations of such referrals was 10,498, 4,476 from the Wilmington schools and 6,022 from the state schools. The recommendations, varying with the case, included placement in special, opportunity, and prevocational classes; modified instruction in the regular grade; special remedial instruction (most frequently in reading), social adjustment, and follow-up physical examinations and treatment by the family physician or in a clinic or hospital.
6. The cummulative registration in 14 special classes in the state was 2,472 and in 18 special classes in Wilmington 5,103. A limited investigation in 1942 showed that the enrollment in the state opportunity classes, small as it was (about one per cent of the first nine grades) compared favorably with the enrollment in the leading states in this phase of service two or three years later (Pennsylvania,

1.56; Massachusetts, 1.50; New York, 1.20; Minnesota, 1.10; Wisconsin, .91; Connecticut, .90; New Jersey, .82; Ohio, .80; and California, .74.)

The enrollment in the Wilmington special, opportunity and prevocational classes, 4.7%, was far ahead of many other cities at the same time (Chicago, 1.4%, Detroit, 3.4%, St. Louis, less than 1% (St. Louis had dropped from 3.7% in 1920-21 when the classes were under my administration). The highest figures reported were from Philadelphia, 6.1%, and Baltimore, 9.5% (Baltimore later suffered a severe reduction). (For these and other figures, see J. E. Wallace Wallin, The Education of Mentally Handicapped Children, Harper and Row, 1955, 28-32).

The Howard Prevocational School, established in 1936, one of the first of its kind in the U.S.A., with an enrollment at the time of the writer's retirement from the Wilmington system in 1945 of 262 boys and girls, won very favorable comments from out-of-state educators after inspection of the school.

7. The inauguration of home-and hospital-instruction for children unable to attend school. One hundred and eighteen pupils were afforded such services at little expense, first by volunteer teachers residing in their territories, and later by teachers twice a week in the late afternoons who served on a modest per hour stipend.

8. The inauguration of speech development and correction services in 1943 (usually referred to as speech therapy), which reached 1089 children in certain geographical areas.

9. Pilot studies of the visually handicapped (specifically the partially sighted), malnutrites, and the crippled were conducted with the cooperation of principals, teachers, nurses and physicians.

10. Programs of education, training and enlightment for adult professionals and the public were launched from time to time. This included the offering of courses of instruction on a credit basis (undergraduate or graduate) through the cooperation of the University of Delaware (reputedly first graduate courses there), New York University, Rutgers, and Delaware State College in eight centers in the state to a total registration of 809 students. Many of the students were or became special-class teachers, while many others became professionals in other types of child service. The courses covered the fields of special education, handicapped children, clinical and abnormal psychology, mental hygiene, personality maladjustments, and specific educational disabilities, especially in reading. It may be recorded incidentally that many of the special class teacher novices eventually became excellent teachers as a result of growing experience and the

training afforded by this extension service. They had become interested and efficient craftsmen.

Professional training is often of very limited value without the spur of deep interest and dedication. Some of my ablest teachers did not have the bachelor's degrees. Some of the poorest teachers had the most training. They had drifted into special education as failures in the regular grades. One was a distinct paranoid. Native drive, strength of intellect, and strong penchants are sometimes more important prerequisites than training.

Another means of spreading information and knowledge was through the publication of experience-engendered texts, articles, papers, bulletins, and reports. Scores of reports were sent to the schools in mimeographed forms, with printed annual summaries in the annual reports of the State Department of Public Instruction.

Conferences, round tables, forums, and seminars were conducted twice a year in several parts of the state for special class teachers (they were attended by many others), at which opportunities were afforded for free discussions, questions and answers, the demonstration of new projects by the teachers, calling attention to new developments, and the like. They were stimulating, provocative dinner meetings, usually in the evenings, which afforded plenty of opportunities for socialization and comraderie.

A section of special education of the State Education Association was established on November 16, 1934. During its thirteen meetings while the writer was director of special education practically every type of handicapped child was considered in talks by invited experts and demonstrations. Handicrafts made by the children were displayed, and demonstrations were made of psychological, educational, and audiometric testing. Some teachers joined the Council for Exceptional Children in 1935 although Chapter 50 (the Delaware branch of the Council) was not formed until April 24, 1941) for reasons now not existent. The council continues to meet three times a year.

Eight or nine cooperating action groups were formed during this period. The writer served as chairman of most of these because of his official position. Most were members of larger public service organizations and rendered valuable service to those groups. Some were not able to accomplish their specific goals because of the severe travel rationing that went into effect during the war period.

## VI. THE REVOLUTION OF THE FIFTIES AND SIXTIES.

The tracing of the developments after the writer's retirement does not come within the purview of this history, but a brief statement

may not prove amiss on the extraordinary developments that began a few years thereafter as a result of the "easing of the money market," and especially as a result of the vigorous propaganda activities of pressure groups.

The efforts have proved futile to obtain from several state officials and agencies exact statements of all the money now spent for the education of all kinds of handicapped children by or through the State Department of Public Instruction for all sorts of purposes in all sorts of facilities — public school special classes, public and private residential institutions in Delaware and elsewhere — for the salaries of teachers and other functionaries; transportation charges, supplies and equipment, and the like. To all this should be added the contributions from the Federal Government and from voluntary organizations. No one of those queried had the slightest idea of the grand total, and no one has ventured any opinion, except the director of Child Development, Guidance, and Pupil Personnel Services, who believes that the total figure is in the neighborhood of two million dollars a year. Certainly accounts should be so kept that on short notice it could be determined how much money is being spent for any and all phases of the work, as was the case in St. Louis and Baltimore when I had charge of the program in those cities. But the transformation from the penury of the thirties and forties, when the highest annual legislative appropiration was $14,5000, is almost beyond belief. The taxpayer, the public, service agencies, the legislators, and investigators are entitled to know whether the appropriations are spent wisely and efficiently. I have visited special classes in connection with my lectures in many parts of the country and have found the greatest difference in financial support. Some had practically no extra equipment; others were extravagantly equipped. Some were in dire need to fit equipment. But an excess of equipment may mean extravagant spending. The evils to avoid in all public enterprises is the scylla of niggardliness and the charybdis of extravagance.

The present-day liberality in Delaware is largely due to the campaigns conducted by the voluntary associations of which the most vocal is the Delaware Association for Retarded Children, incorporated in March, 1953, for the improvement of the social, psychological, educational, occupational and physical conditions of mental retardates of all ages through its comprehensive action program, which has yielded about $500,000.00 up to the present time. The greatest source of its financial drives has been the football contest, held in August, between high school teams representing the northern and southern parts of the state. Last year this contest brought in about $40,000.

## VII. APPENDIX I.

### SPECIAL CLASSES IN THE DELAWARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRIOR TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND MENTAL HYGIENE

The following record of developments is based on interviews with many staff members during visits to the schools in 1932-1934. More recently an effort has been made to verify the record by an inspection of the Educational Directories from 1929 through the early thirties. Such an inspection revealed various discrepancies not always reconcilable. But agreement exists on nearly all the facts disclosed hereinafter. The discrepancies with references to Delmar and Milford have been noted. On the basis of data submitted by Mr. Mulrooney some discrepant items from Wilmington have been adjusted.

Inspection of the classes in existence in 1932-1934 revealed that most of them were very poorly equipped — in fact, many had no special equipment whatever — many of the textbooks were tattered and torn castaways; many classes contained a great variety of educational ne'er-do-wells selected on the prescientific basis of the teacher's or principal's opinions of the child's school performance without the benefit of definite guidelines, or admission standards, or acceptable examination techniques. Reports of examinations by the Mental Hygiene Clinic (established in 1929) were found for only a few cases.

The reorganization of the classes in accordance with the standards that had been adopted began with the school year 1932-1933. The basic idea was to organize classes to meet various ability levels, such as were already in existence in St. Louis, the State of Ohio in classes organized by the Bureau of Special Education of Miami University, and Baltimore.

#### *State Classes*

The first classes in the State were started as follows: Marshallton, 1926, a part-time class taught by Elizabeth P. Brady.

Millsboro, 1929 (or 1931, according to the school Directory, with Ethel Tingle as the first teacher.

Lewes, 1930, part-time, with F. Murtice Holt as teacher; 1931, with Bernice P. Houston as teacher of a "special group."

Delmar, September, 1931 (unrecorded in the Directory).

Milford, undated and also unrecorded in the Directory.

#### *Wilmington Classes*

A "steamer class" was opened in September, 1923, in the Peoples Settlement for foreign-born children and other types of educational-

ly disadvantaged and misfit children, taught by Helen E. Ewing, who died on July 6, 1966, at the age of 76, prima among special-class teachers in the Delaware public schools. The class was moved to the Wilmington Savings Fund in September, 1925; to the new Bancroft school in September, 1926; in September 1929 the teacher was transferred to School No. 2. This class was closed in June, 1932, a short time after the Director's arrival. The teacher thereupon was assigned to a Class for Individual Instruction in the Williams school, in September, 1932, under the administration of the new director.

A "special class" for mental deficients was started in February, 1926, in School No. 14, later renamed Palmer school, where it continued to June, 1930, when the teacher, Ella Crossan, was reassigned to School No. 2. Upon the closing of this class in June, 1932, she was transferred to a Class for Individual Instruction in the Lore school under the administration of the new Director.

A class for restorables was started in the Gray school in May, 1926, with Gracia A. de Cormier as teacher, but it contained few restorables. It was continued as a class for deficients from September, 1926, to June, 1930. It was then closed and the teacher was transferred to School No. 2. It was reopened in September, 1931; closed in June, 1932; and reestablished in September by the Director as a Special Class for Individual Instruction.

A special class was opened in No. 29 school for Negro children in February, 1927, for "all kinds of handicapped children," with Clara F. Simpson as teacher, but was closed in June, 1932, because of overcrowding in the school.

An "opportunity class for subnormals" was opened in February, 1928, in the Bancroft school with Josephine Clothier as teacher. It became a part of the special education department in September, 1932.

A so-called restoration class was taught by Jennie E. Frazier in No. 11, a portable school, from September, 1928, to June, 1932, when the school was closed.

A "restoration class" was established in the Lore school on September, 23, 1929, with Estella R. Steelman as teacher. Some of the assignees were on full-time, but some of the older pupils spent part of the time in the regular grades. When inspected in June, 1932, few in the class were of the restoration type. The class was abolished in June, 1932, and reestablished in September, 1933, as an "opportunity" class with the same teacher.

In the Bayard school in September, 1929, small groups of children with "academic handicaps" received individual instruction in a room

taught by Jennie L. Church. This program was terminated in June, 1932, when the elementary pupils were transferred to the new Williams school.

In September, 1931, an "opportunity class" was established in the Elbert School (for Negroes), with Annie J. Murdah (later Marks) as teacher. She retired in 1965. In September, 1932, the class was reclassified as a Special Class for Individual Instruction.

In 1931-32 Dorothy B. Lloyd taught a special class in No. 3 school.

Only the two special classes in No. 2 school possessed any special equipment. The equipment was grossly overstocked with certain kinds of handicraft materials, such as raffia, reed, and carpet materials, with no provisions for other types of essential handicraft training. By the end of the first year a good beginning had been made toward supplying all the classes with needed supplies and equipment.

## VIII. APPENDIX II.

## REFERENCES

The following reference lists to writings by the author have been prepared particularly for those who may want further details or documentation or who may want to undertake historical investigations of the problems discussed for advanced degrees or merely for self-improvement or extension of information. The references are arranged in three groups: I. Documentary reports; II. Journal or Periodical articles; and III. Newspaper articles or news notes. The newspaper materials are arranged chronologically rather than topically.

### *I. Documentary Reports*

Annual Reports from the Division of Special Education and Mental Hygiene to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, published in the Annual Reports of the Delaware Department of Public Instruction from 1933-34 to 1946-47.

Similar Reports in typescript to the Superintendent of Schools in Wilmington from 1932-33 to 1945.

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### *II. Journal or Periodical Articles.*

A Brief History of Special Education in Delaware, Cerebral Palsy Review, May-June, 1955, 21-22, 26-27.

Education of Children of Low Ability, Corrigenda, School and Society, October 16, 1951, 80, 119-120.

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Children Unable to Attend School Will Get Instruction, May 25, 1945.

Child Study Committee to Aid Deficients, November 18, 1945.

Handicapped Children Aided, November 18, 1945.

Expansion of Mental Hygiene Program in Schools Urged, April 4, 1946.

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Not the First Time, February 6, 1948.

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College Failures and the Fallacy of Automatic Promotion, January 26, 1949.

Dr. Wallin Discusses State Law for Education of Handicapped, January 13, 1951.

Stockley Colony, Facts and Fiction, October 10, 1953.
History of Speech Training in State Schools, March 17, 1954.
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Dr. Wallin Protests, December 6, 1955.
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Missouri Was First, July 2, 1957.
It Began in 1936, March 14, 1959.
City Educator Would Have Matador Fight Retardation, February 15, 1963.

Wilmington Morning News:
Deficient Pupils are Saved through Mental Hygiene Work, October 23, 1942.
1500 Handicapped Children Need Aid Here, February 6, 1943.
7-Point School Progress Urged, January 26, 1945.
For the Retarded, November 17, 1955.

Wilmington Sunday Star:
Retarded Children to be Assisted, March 28, 1943.
Speech Correction Now in Public Schools, October 17, 1943.
Suburban Schools to Offer Speech Therapy, January 6, 1946.
State Criticized by Dr. Wallin, January 12, 1947.
Neglect of Subnormal Children in Delaware Schools, April 6, 1947.
Director Wallin, Pioneer Retiree, Helped to Salvage 'Submerged Tenth,' June 15, 1947.
Neglect of Subnormal Children in Delaware Schools, April 5, 1949.
Over 50 Years in Psychology, Joe Martin, September 20, 1953.

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